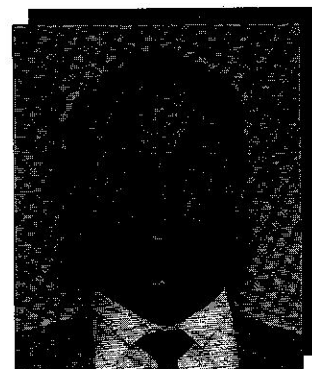


Certification Corner

The National Certification Program...

An Open, Ongoing Process

by George P. Kousaleos



As the new Chair of the National Certification Steering Committee, this is my first Certification Corner column. I am pleased to report that the Certification Program has had a busy and productive summer, completing the job analysis survey and presenting certification information to national and state forums.

Certification Steering Committee members participated in panel discussions at the Bay Area Bodyguild's forum in San Francisco. Liaison Committee Chair, **Ray Castellino, D.C.**, was joined by **Steve Eabry, Carol Carpenter, David Palmer, Robert Calvert** and **Judith McKinnon** in a discussion of the benefits and disadvantages of national certification. At the AMTA National Conference in Boulder, seven members of the Steering Committee formed a panel to answer questions about the recent accomplishments and future goals of the Certification Program.

In June **Ray Castellino, Steven Schenkman, Nandi Dubitsky** and **Jeff Maitland**, serving as a Liaison Team, gave a certification update at the fourth Head, Heart and Hands Summit in Minneapolis. "I'm excited about what happened at the Summit," said Ray. "There was an opening of doors that had been previously shut as association and discipline leaders discussed common goals and realized that they could have input to the certification process."

AMTA's Summit representative, **John Fred Spack**, said, "There was a key revelation that was shared by

many representatives that the Steering Committee and the decisions of the future Council and Board will be independent from the AMTA National Board of Directors."

In July **Benny Vaughn, Elliot Greene, Steven Schenkman** and I attended the panel discussion "Crossroads of Opportunity" at the Florida State Massage Therapy Association's annual convention. In small group discussions following the opening remarks of the panel, it became obvious to the members of the Steering Committee that erroneous information and lack of knowledge persists, in spite of all the information that has been disseminated by the Certification Program.

During the Florida convention **Steven Schenkman** and I had six hours of negotiations with representatives of the Head, Heart and Hands Summit Board. The negotiations focused on issues that could lead to a more active role for Summit representatives on the Certification Liaison Committee.

In early August the Job Analysis Advisory Committee, chaired by **Susanne Carlson**, mailed the completed job analysis survey to 7,200 massage therapists and bodyworkers nationwide.

The data will be collected and analyzed in September and presented to the Steering Committee in October. **Joan Knapp**, job analysis consultant, will present an interim report to the AMTA membership at the National Convention in Miami Beach.

A final report will be completed in January '91, representing the most complete information on the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for entry level massage therapists and bodyworkers that has ever been compiled.

In October the Steering Committee will begin work on many critical issues. A professional test development company will be hired and test committees will begin to take form. The transition from Steering Committee to Certification Council will begin, along with defining a more active role for liaison representatives. The first liaison hearings will be organized for February '91, allowing affiliated groups to present position papers on test construction, organizational structure, recertification, grandfathering, continuing education and any other topics directly related to certification.

Although critics of national certification have claimed that it is a closed process, Committee members are committed to keeping the process open and available to the professional community.

National certification is a key step in the evolution of professional standards. Its purposes include avoidance of external regulations, enhancement of professional prestige, increased influence of the professional community, assurance of professional competence, and the stabilization of individual job security. Thank you for your concerns, your contributions, your criticisms, and your support. ♦